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# SONGS OF THE SPRINGTIDES

BY

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE



London

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THALASSIUS  
ON THE CLIFFS  
THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE



## DEDICATION.

TO EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY.

*A SEA-MEW on a sea-king's wrist alighting,  
As the north sea-wind caught and strained and curled  
The raven-figured flag that led men fighting  
From field to green field of the water-world,  
Might find such brief high favour at his hand  
For wings imbrued with brine, with foam impearled,  
As these my songs require at yours on land,  
That durst not save for love's free sake require,  
Being lightly born between the foam and sand,  
But reared by hope and memory and desire  
Of lives that were and life that is to be,  
Even such as filled his heavenlier song with fire  
Whose very voice, that sang to set man free,  
Was in your ears as ever in ours his lyre,  
Once, ere the flame received him from the sea.*







**THALASSIUS**

**B**



*THALASSIUS.*

UPON the flowery forefront of the year,  
One wandering by the grey-green April sea  
Found on a reach of shingle and shallower sand  
Inlaid with starrier glimmering jewellery  
Left for the sun's love and the light wind's cheer  
Along the foam-flowered strand  
Breeze-brightened, something nearer sea than land  
Though the last shoreward blossom-fringe was near,  
A babe asleep with flower-soft face that gleamed  
To sun and seaward as it laughed and dreamed,  
Too sure of either love for either's fear,  
Albeit so birdlike slight and light, it seemed

Nor man nor mortal child of man, but fair  
As even its twin-born tenderer spray-flowers were,  
That the wind scatters like an Oread's hair.

For when July strewed fire on earth and sea  
The last time ere that year,  
Out of the flame of morn, Cymothoe  
Beheld one brighter than the sunbright sphere  
Move toward her from its fieriest heart, whence trod  
The live sun's very God,  
Across the foam-bright water-ways that are  
As heavenlier heavens with star for answering star,  
And on her eyes and hair and maiden mouth  
Felt a kiss falling fierier than the South  
And heard above afar  
A noise of songs and wind-enamoured wings  
And lutes and lyres of milder and mightier strings,

And round the resonant radiance of his car  
Where depth is one with height,  
Light heard as music, music seen as light  
And with that second moondawn of the spring's  
That fosters the first rose,  
A sun-child whiter than the sunlit snows  
Was born out of the world of sunless things  
That round the round earth flows and ebbs and flows.

But he that found the sea-flower by the sea  
And took to foster like a graft of earth  
Was born of man's most highest and heavenliest birth,  
Free-born as winds and stars and waves are free ;  
A warrior grey with glories more than years,  
Though more of years than change the quick to dead  
Had rained their light and darkness on his head  
A singer that in time's and memory's ears

Should leave such words to sing as all his peers  
Might praise with hallowing heat of rapturous tears  
Till all the days of human flight were fled.  
And at his knees his fosterling was fed  
Not with man's wine and bread  
Nor mortal mother-milk of hopes and fears,  
But food of deep memorial days long sped ;  
For bread with wisdom and with song for wine  
Clear as the full calm's emerald hyaline.  
And from his grave glad lips the boy would gather  
Fine honey of song-notes goldener than gold,  
More sweet than bees make of the breathing heather,  
That he, as glad and bold,  
Might drink as they, and keep his spirit from cold.  
And the boy loved his laurel-laden hair  
As his own father's risen on the eastern air,  
And that less white brow-binding bayleaf bloom

More than all flowers his father's eyes relume ;  
And those high songs he heard,  
More than all notes of any landward bird,  
More than all sounds less free  
Than the wind's quiring to the choral sea.

High things the high song taught him ; how the breath  
Too frail for life may be more strong than death ;  
And this poor flash of sense in life, that gleams  
As a ghost's glory in dreams,  
More stabile than the world's own heart's root seems,  
By that strong faith of lordliest love which gives  
To death's own sightless-seeming eyes a light  
Clearer, to death's bare bones a verier might,  
Than shines or strikes from any man that lives.  
How he that loves life overmuch shall die  
The dog's death, utterly :

And he that much less loves it than he hates  
All wrongdoing that is done  
Anywhere always underneath the sun  
Shall live a mightier life than time's or fate's.  
One fairer thing he shewed him, and in might  
More strong than day and night  
Whose strengths build up time's towering period :  
Yea, one thing stronger and more high than God,  
Which if man had not, then should God not be :  
And that was Liberty.  
And gladly should man die to gain, he said,  
Freedom ; and gladlier, having lost, lie dead.  
For man's earth was not, nor the sweet sea-waves  
His, nor his own land, nor its very graves,  
Except they bred not, bore not, hid not slaves:  
But all of all that is,  
Were one man free in body and soul, were his.



And the song softened, even as heaven by night  
Softens, from sunnier down to starrier light,  
And with its moonbright breath  
Blessed life for death's sake, and for life's sake death.  
Till as the moon's own beam and breath confuse  
In one clear hueless haze of glimmering hues  
The sea's line and the land's line and the sky's,  
And light for love of darkness almost dies,  
As darkness only lives for light's dear love,  
Whose hands the web of night is woven of :  
So in that heaven of wondrous words were life  
And death brought out of strife ;  
Yea, by that strong spell of serene increase  
Brought out of strife to peace.

And the song lightened, as the wind at morn  
Flashes, and even with lightning of the wind

Night's thick-spun web is thinned  
And all its weft unwoven and overworn  
Shrinks, as might love from scorn.  
And as when wind and light on water and land  
Leap as twin gods from heavenward hand in hand,  
And with the sound and splendour of their leap  
Strike darkness dead, and daunt the spirit of sleep,  
And burn it up with fire ;  
So with the light that lightened from the lyre  
Was all the bright heat in the child's heart stirred  
And blown with blasts of music into flame  
Till even his sense became  
Fire, as the sense that fires the singing bird  
Whose song calls night by name.  
And in the soul within the sense began  
The manlike passion of a godlike man,  
And in the sense within the soul again

Thoughts that make men of gods and gods of men.

For love the high song taught him : love that turns  
God's heart toward man as man's to Godward ; love  
That life and death and life are fashioned of,  
From the first breath that burns  
Half kindled on the flowerlike yeanling's lip,  
So light and faint that life seems like to slip,  
To that yet weaklier drawn  
When sunset dies of night's devouring dawn  
But the man dying not wholly as all men dies  
If aught be left of his in live men's eyes  
Out of the dawnless dark of death to rise ;  
If aught of deed or word  
Be seen for all time or of all time heard.  
Love, that though body and soul were overthrown  
Should live for love's sake of itself alone,

Though spirit and flesh were one thing doomed and dead,  
Not wholly annihilated.

Seeing even the hoariest ash-flake that the pyre  
Drops, and forgets the thing was once afire  
And gave its heart to feed the pile's full flame  
Till its own heart its own heat overcame,  
Outlives its own life, though by scarce a span,  
As such men dying outlive themselves in man,  
Outlive themselves for ever ; if the heat  
Outburn the heart that kindled it, the sweet  
Outlast the flower whose soul it was, and flit  
Forth of the body of it  
Into some new shape of a strange perfume  
More potent than its light live spirit of bloom,  
How shall not something of that soul relive,  
That only soul that had such gifts to give  
As lighten something even of all men's doom

Even from the labouring womb  
Even to the seal set on the unopening tomb?  
And these the loving light of song and love  
Shall wrap and lap round and impend above,  
Imperishable ; and all springs born illume  
Their sleep with brighter thoughts than wake the dove  
To music, when the hillside winds resume  
The marriage-song of heather-flower and broom  
And all the joy thereof.

And hate the song too taught him : hate of all  
That brings or holds in thrall  
Of spirit or flesh, free-born ere God began,  
The holy body and sacred soul of man.  
And wheresoever a curse was or a chain,  
A throne for torment or a crown for bane  
Rose, moulded out of poor men's molten pain,

There, said he, should man's heaviest hate be set  
Inexorably, to faint not or forget  
Till the last warmth bled forth of the last vein  
In flesh that none should call a king's again,  
Seeing wolves and dogs and birds that plague-strike air  
Leave the last bone of all the carrion bare.

And hope the high song taught him: hope whose eyes  
Can sound the seas unsoundable, the skies  
Inaccessible of eyesight ; that can see  
What earth beholds not, hear what wind and sea  
Hear not, and speak what all these crying in one  
Can speak not to the sun.  
For in her sovereign eyelight all things are  
Clear as the closest seen and kindlier star  
That marries morn and even and winter and spring  
With one love's golden ring.

For she can see the days of man, the birth  
Of good and death of evil things on earth  
Inevitable and infinite, and sure  
As present pain is, or herself is pure.  
Yea, she can hear and see, beyond all things  
That lighten from before Time's thunderous wings  
Through the awful circle of wheel-winged periods,  
The tempest of the twilight of all Gods :  
And higher than all the circling course they ran  
The sundawn of the spirit that was man.

And fear the song too taught him ; fear to be  
Worthless the dear love of the wind and sea  
That bred him fearless, like a sea-mew reared  
In rocks of man's foot feared,  
Where nought of wingless life may sing or shine.  
Fear to wax worthless of that heaven he had

When all the life in all his limbs was glad  
And all the drops in all his veins were wine  
And all the pulses music ; when his heart,  
Singing, bade heaven and wind and sea bear part  
In one live song's reiteration, and they bore :  
Fear to go crownless of the flower he wore  
When the winds loved him and the waters knew,  
The blithest life that clove their blithe life through  
With living limbs exultant, or held strife  
More amorous than all dalliance aye anew  
With the bright breath and strength of their large life,  
With all strong wrath of all sheer winds that blew,  
All glories of all storms of the air that fell  
Prone, ineluctable,  
With roar from heaven of revel, and with hue  
As of a heaven turned hell.  
For when the red blast of their breath had made



All heaven aflush with light more dire than shade,  
He felt it in his blood and eyes and hair  
Burn as if all the fires of the earth and air  
Had laid strong hold upon his flesh, and stung  
The soul behind it as with serpent's tongue,  
Forked like the loveliest lightnings : nor could bear  
But hardly, half distraught with strong delight,  
The joy that like a garment wrapped him round  
And lapped him over and under  
With raiment of great light  
And rapture of great sound  
At every loud leap earthward of the thunder  
From heaven's most furthest bound :  
So seemed all heaven in hearing and in sight,  
Alive and mad with glory and angry joy,  
That something of its marvellous mirth and might  
Moved even to madness, fledged as even for flight,

The blood and spirit of one but mortal boy.

So, clothed with love and fear that love makes great,  
And armed with hope and hate,  
He set first foot upon the spring-flowered ways  
That all feet pass and praise.  
And one dim dawn between the winter and spring,  
In the sharp harsh wind harrying heaven and earth  
To put back April that had borne his birth  
From sunward on her sunniest shower-struck wing,  
With tears and laughter for the dew-dropt thing,  
Slight as indeed a dew-drop, by the sea  
One met him lovelier than all men may be,  
God-featured, with god's eyes ; and in their might  
Somewhat that drew men's own to mar their sight,  
Even of all eyes drawn toward him : and his mouth  
Was as the very rose of all men's youth,

One rose of all the rose-beds in the world:

But round his brows the curls were snakes that  
curled,

And like his tongue a serpent's ; and his voice  
Speaks death, and bids rejoice.

Yet then he spake no word, seeming as dumb,  
A dumb thing mild and hurtless ; nor at first  
From his bowed eyes seemed any light to come,  
Nor his meek lips for blood or tears to thirst :  
But as one blind and mute in mild sweet wise  
Pleading for pity of piteous lips and eyes,  
He strayed with faint bare lily-lovely feet  
Helpless, and flowerlike sweet :

Nor might man see, not having word hereof,  
That this of all gods was the great god Love.

And seeing him lovely and like a little child

That wellnigh wept for wonder that it smiled  
And was so feeble and fearful, with soft speech  
The youth bespake him softly ; but there fell  
From the sweet lips no sweet word audible  
That ear or thought might reach :  
No sound to make the dim cold silence glad,  
No breath to thaw the hard harsh air with heat ;  
Only the saddest smile of all things sweet,  
Only the sweetest smile of all things sad.

And so they went together one green way  
Till April dying made free the world for May ;  
And on his guide suddenly Love's face turned,  
And in his blind eyes burned  
Hard light and heat of laughter ; and like flame  
That opens in a mountain's ravening mouth  
To blar and sear the sunlight from the south,

His mute mouth opened, and his first word came :

‘ Knowest thou me now by name ? ’

And all his stature waxed immeasurable,

As of one shadowing heaven and lightening hell ;

And statelier stood he than a tower that stands

And darkens with its darkness far-off sands

Whereon the sky leans red ;

And with a voice that stilled the winds he said :

‘ I am he that was thy lord before thy birth,

I am he that is thy lord till thou turn earth :

I make the night more dark, and all the morrow

Dark as the night whose darkness was my breath :

O fool, my name is sorrow ;

Thou fool, my name is death.’

And he that heard spake not, and looked right on

Again, and Love was gone.

Through many a night toward many a wearier day  
His spirit bore his body down its way.  
Through many a day toward many a wearier night  
His soul sustained his sorrows in her sight.  
And earth was bitter, and heaven, and even the sea  
Sorrowful even as he.  
And the wind helped not, and the sun was dumb ;  
And with too long strong stress of grief to be  
His heart grew sere and numb.

And one bright eve ere summer in autumn sank  
At stardawn standing on a grey sea-bank  
He felt the wind fitfully shift and heave  
As toward a stormier eve ;  
And all the wan wide sea shuddered ; and earth  
Shook underfoot as toward some timeless birth,  
Intolerable and inevitable ; and all

Heaven, darkling, trembled like a stricken thrall.  
And far out of the quivering east, and far  
From past the moonrise and its guiding star,  
Began a noise of tempest and a light  
That was not of the lightning ; and a sound  
Rang with it round and round  
That was not of the thunder ; and a flight  
As of blown clouds by night,  
That was not of them ; and with songs and cries  
That sang and shrieked their soul out at the skies  
A shapeless earthly storm of shapes began  
From all ways round to move in on the man,  
Clamorous against him silent ; and their feet  
Were as the wind's are fleet,  
And their shrill songs were as wild birds' are sweet.

And as when all the world of earth was wronged

And all the host of all men driven afoam  
By the red hand of Rome,  
Round some fierce amphitheatre overthronged  
With fair clear faces full of bloodier lust  
Than swells and stings the tiger when his mood  
Is fieriest after blood  
And drunk with trampling of the murderous must  
That soaks and stains the tortuous close-coiled wood  
Made monstrous with its myriad-mustering brood,  
Face by fair face panted and gleamed and pressed,  
And breast by passionate breast  
Heaved hot with ravenous rapture, as they quaffed  
The red ripe full fume of the deep live draught,  
The sharp quick reek of keen fresh bloodshed, blown  
Through the dense deep drift up to the emperor's throne  
From the under steaming sands  
With clamour of all-applausive throats and hands,



Mingling in mirthful time  
With shrill blithe mockeries of the lithe-limbed mime :  
So from somewhence far forth of the un beholden,  
Dreadfully driven from over and after and under,  
Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen blast and golden,  
With sound of chiming waves that drown the thunder  
Or thunder that strikes dumb the sea's own chimes,  
Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced mimes,  
Terrible ; firs bowed down as briars or palms  
Even at the breathless blast as of a breeze  
Fulfilled with clamour and clangour and storms of  
    psalms ;  
Red hands rent up the roots of oldworld trees,  
Thick flames of torches tossed as tumbling seas  
Made mad the moonless and infuriate air  
That, ravening, revelled in the riotous hair  
And raiment of the furred Bassarides.

So came all those in on him ; and his heart,  
As out of sleep suddenly struck astart,  
Danced, and his flesh took fire of theirs, and grief  
Was as a last year's leaf  
Blown dead far down the wind's way ; and he set  
His pale mouth to the brightest mouth it met  
That laughed for love against his lips, and bade  
Follow ; and in following all his blood grew glad  
And as again a sea-bird's ; for the wind  
Took him to bathe him deep round breast and brow  
Not as it takes a dead leaf drained and thinned,  
But as the brightest bay-flower blown on bough,  
Set springing toward it singing : and they rode  
By many a vine-leafed, many a rose-hung road,  
Exalt with exultation ; many a night  
Set all its stars upon them as for spies  
On many a moon-bewildering mountain-height

Where he rode only by the fierier light  
Of his dread lady's hot sweet hungering eyes.  
For the moon wandered witless of her way,  
Spell-stricken by strong magic in such wise  
As wizards use to set the stars astray.  
And in his ears the music that makes mad  
Beat always ; and what way the music bade,  
That alway rode he ; nor was any sleep  
His, nor from height nor deep.  
But heaven was as red iron, slumberless,  
And had no heart to bless ;  
And earth lay sere and darkling as distraught,  
And help in her was nought.

Then many a midnight, many a morn and even,  
His mother, passing forth of her fair heaven,  
With goodlier gifts than all save gods can give

From earth or from the heaven where sea-things live,  
With shine of sea-flowers through the bay-leaf braid  
Woven for a crown her foam-white hands had made  
To crown him with land's laurel and sea-dew,  
Sought the sea-bird that was her boy : but he  
Sat panther-throned beside Erigone,  
Riding the red ways of the revel through  
Midmost of pale-mouthed passion's crownless crew.  
Till on some winter's dawn of some dim year  
He let the vine-bit on the panther's lip  
Slide, and the green rein slip,  
And set his eyes to seaward, nor gave ear  
If sound from landward hailed him, dire or dear ;  
And passing forth of all those fair fierce ranks  
Back to the grey sea-banks,  
Against a sea-rock lying, aslant the steep,  
Fell after many sleepless dreams on sleep.

And in his sleep the dun green light was shed  
Heavily round his head  
That through the veil of sea falls fathom-deep,  
Blurred like a lamp's that when the night drops dead  
Dies ; and his eyes gat grace of sleep to see  
The deep divine dark dayshine of the sea,  
Dense water-walls and clear dusk water-ways,  
Broad-based, or branching as a sea-flower sprays  
That side or this dividing ; and anew  
The glory of all her glories that he knew.  
And in sharp rapture of recovering tears  
He woke on fire with yearnings of old years,  
Pure as one purged of pain that passion bore,  
Ill child of bitter mother ; for his own  
Looked laughing toward him from her midsea throne,  
Up toward him there ashore.

Thence in his heart the great same joy began,  
Of child that made him man :  
And turned again from all hearts else on quest,  
He communed with his own heart, and had rest.  
And like sea-winds upon loud waters ran  
His days and dreams together, till the joy  
Burned in him of the boy.  
Till the earth's great comfort and the sweet sea's breath  
Breathed and blew life in where was heartless death,  
Death spirit-stricken of soul-sick days, where strife  
Of thought and flesh made mock of death and life.  
And grace returned upon him of his birth  
Where heaven was mixed with heavenlike sea and earth ;  
And song shot forth strong wings that took the sun  
From inward, fledged with might of sorrow and mirth  
And father's fire made mortal in his son.  
Nor was not spirit of strength in blast and breeze

To exalt again the sun's child and the sea's ;  
For as wild mares in Thessaly grow great  
With child of ravishing winds, that violate  
Their leaping length of limb with manes like fire  
And eyes outburning heaven's  
With fires more violent than the lightning levin's  
And breath drained out and desperate of desire,  
Even so the spirit in him, when winds grew strong,  
Grew great with child of song.  
Nor less than when his veins first leapt for joy  
To draw delight in such as burns a boy,  
Now too the soul of all his senses felt  
The passionate pride of deep sea-pulses dealt  
Through nerve and jubilant vein  
As from the love and largess of old time,  
And with his heart again  
The tidal throb of all the tides keep rhyme

And charm him from his own soul's separate sense  
With infinite and invasive influence  
That made strength sweet in him and sweetness strong,  
Being now no more a singer, but a song.

Till one clear day when brighter sea-wind blew  
And louder sea-shine lightened, for the waves  
Were full of godhead and the light that saves,  
His father's, and their spirit had pierced him through,  
He felt strange breath and light all round him shed  
That bowed him down with rapture ; and he knew  
His father's hand, hallowing his humbled head,  
And the old great voice of the old good time, that said :

‘ Child of my sunlight and the sea, from birth  
A fosterling and fugitive on earth ;  
Sleepless of soul as wind or wave or fire,



A manchild with an ungrown God's desire ;  
Because thou hast loved nought mortal more than me,  
Thy father, and thy mother-hearted sea ;  
Because thou hast set thine heart to sing, and sold  
Life and life's love for song, God's living gold ;  
Because thou hast given thy flower and fire of youth  
To feed men's hearts with visions, truer than truth ;  
Because thou hast kept in those world-wandering eyes  
The light that makes me music of the skies ;  
Because thou hast heard with world-unwearied ears  
The music that puts light into the spheres ;  
Have therefore in thine heart and in thy mouth  
The sound of song that mingles north and south,  
The song of all the winds that sing of me,  
And in thy soul the sense of all the sea.'



## ON THE CLIFFS



*ON THE CLIFFS.*

*ἡμερόφωνος ἀηδὼν.*

SAPPHO.

BETWEEN the moondawn and the sundown here  
 The twilight hangs half starless ; half the sea  
 Still quivers as for love or pain or fear  
 Or pleasure mightier than these all may be  
 A man's live heart might beat  
 Wherein a God's with mortal blood should meet  
 And fill its pulse too full to bear the strain  
 With fear or love or pleasure's twin-born, pain.  
 Fiercely the gaunt woods to the grim soil cling  
 That bears for all fair fruits

Wan wild sparse flowers of windy and wintry spring  
Between the tortive serpent-shapen roots  
Wherethrough their dim growth hardly strikes and shoots  
And shews one gracious thing  
Hardly, to speak for summer one sweet word  
Of summer's self scarce heard.  
But higher the steep green sterile fields, thick-set  
With flowerless hawthorn even to the upward verge  
Whence the woods gathering watch new cliffs emerge  
Higher than their highest of crown'd that sea-winds fret,  
Hold fast, for all that night or wind can say,  
Some pale pure colour yet,  
Too dim for green and luminous for grey.  
Between the climbing inland cliffs above  
And these beneath that breast and break the bay,  
A barren peace too soft for hate or love  
Broods on an hour too dim for night or day.

O wind, O wingless wind that walk'st the sea,  
Weak wind, wing-broken, wearier wind than we,  
Who are yet not spirit-broken, maimed like thee,  
Who wail not in our inward night as thou  
In the outer darkness now,  
What word has the old sea given thee for mine ear  
From thy faint lips to hear?  
For some word would she send me, knowing not how.

Nay, what far other word  
Than ever of her was spoken, or of me  
Or all my winged white kinsfolk of the sea  
Between fresh wave and wave was ever heard,  
Cleaves the clear dark enwinding tree with tree  
Too close for stars to separate and to see  
Enmeshed in multitudinous unity?

What voice of what strong God hath stormed and stirred  
The fortified rock of silence, rent apart  
Even to the core Night's all-maternal heart ?  
What voice of God grown heavenlier in a bird,  
Made keener of edge to smite  
Than lightning,—yea, thou knowest, O mother Night,  
Keen as that cry from thy strange children sent  
Wherewith the Athenian judgment-shrine was rent,  
For wrath that all their wrath was vainly spent,  
Their wrath for wrong made right  
By justice in her own divine despite  
That bade pass forth unblamed  
The sinless matricide and unashamed ?  
Yea, what new cry is this, what note more bright  
Than their song's wing of words was dark of flight,  
What word is this thou hast heard,  
Thine and not thine or theirs, O Night, what word



More keen than lightning and more sweet than light ?  
As all men's hearts grew godlike in one bird  
And all those hearts cried on thee, crying with might,  
Hear us, O mother Night !

Dumb is the mouth of darkness as of death :  
Light, sound and life are one  
In the eyes and lips of dawn that draw the sun  
To hear what first child's word with glimmering breath  
Their weak wan weanling child the twilight saith ;  
But night makes answer none.

God, if thou be god,—bird, if bird thou be,—  
Do thou then answer me.  
For but one word, what wind soever blow,  
Is blown up usward ever from the sea.  
In fruitless years of youth dead long ago

And deep beneath their own dead leaves and snow  
Buried, I heard with bitter heart and sere  
The same sea's word unchangeable, nor knew  
But that mine own life-days were changeless too  
And sharp and salt with unshed tear on tear  
And cold and fierce and barren ; and my soul,  
Sickening, swam weakly with bated breath  
In a deep sea like death,  
And felt the wind buffet her face with brine  
Hard, and harsh thought on thought in long bleak roll  
Blown by keen gusts of memory sad as thine  
Heap the weight up of pain, and break, and leave  
Strength scarce enough to grieve  
In the sick heavy spirit, unmanned with strife  
Of waves that beat at the tired lips of life.

Nay, sad may be man's memory, sad may be

The dream he weaves him as for shadow of thee,  
But scarce one breathing-space, one heartbeat long,  
Wilt thou take shadow of sadness on thy song.  
Not thou, being more than man or man's desire,  
Being bird and God in one,  
With throat of gold and spirit of the sun ;  
The sun whom all our souls and songs call sire,  
Whose godhead gave thee, chosen of all our quire,  
Thee only of all that serve, of all that sing  
Before our sire and king,  
Borne up some space on time's world-wandering wing,  
This gift, this doom, to bear till time's wing tire—  
Life everlasting of eternal fire.

Thee only of all ; yet can no memory say  
How many a night and day  
My heart has been as thy heart, and my life

As thy life is, a sleepless hidden thing,  
Full of the thirst and hunger of winter and spring,  
That seeks its food not in such love or strife  
As fill men's hearts with passionate hours and rest.  
From no loved lips and on no loving breast  
Have I sought ever for such gifts as bring  
Comfort, to stay the secret soul with sleep.  
The joys, the loves, the labours, whence men reap  
Rathe fruit of hopes and fears,  
I have made not mine ; the best of all my days  
Have been as those fair fruitless summer strays,  
Those water-waifs that but the sea-wind steers,  
Flakes of glad foam or flowers on footless ways  
That take the wind in season and the sun,  
And when the wind wills is their season done.

For all my days as all thy days from birth

My heart as thy heart was in me as thee,  
Fire ; and not all the fountains of the sea.  
Have waves enough to quench it, nor on earth  
Is fuel enough to feed,  
While day sows night and night sows day for seed.

We were not marked for sorrow, thou nor I,  
For joy nor sorrow, sister, were we made,  
To take delight and grief to live and die,  
Assuaged by pleasures or by pains affrayed  
That melt men's hearts and alter ; we retain  
A memory mastering pleasure and all pain,  
A spirit within the sense of ear and eye,  
A soul behind the soul, that seeks and sings  
And makes our life move only with its wings  
And feed but from its lips, that in return  
Feed of our hearts wherein the old fires that burn

Have strength not to consume

Nor glory enough to exalt us past our doom.

*Ah, ah, the doom* (thou knowest whence rang that wail)

*Of the shrill nightingale !*

(From whose wild lips, thou knowest, that wail was thrown)

*For round about her have the great gods cast*

*A wing-borne body, and clothed her close and fast*

*With a sweet life that hath no part in moan.*

*But me, for me* (how hadst thou heart to hear ?)

*Remains a sundering with the two-edged spear.*

*Ah, for her doom !* so cried in presage then

The bodeful bondslave of the king of men,

And might not win her will.

Too close the entangling dragnet woven of crime,

The snare of ill new-born of elder ill,

The curse of new time for an elder time,  
Had caught, and held her yet,  
Enmeshed intolerably in the intolerant net,  
Who thought with craft to mock the God most high,  
And win by wiles his crown of prophecy  
From the Sun's hand sublime,  
As God were man, to spare or to forget.

But thou,—the gods have given thee and forgiven thee  
More than our master gave  
That strange-eyed spirit-wounded strange-tongued slave  
There questing houndlike where the roofs red-wet  
Reeked as a wet red grave.  
Life everlasting has their strange grace given thee,  
Even hers whom thou wast wont to sing and serve  
With eyes, but not with song, too swift to swerve ;  
Yet might not even thine eyes estranged estrange her,

Who seeing thee too, but inly, burn and bleed  
Like that pale princess-priest of Priam's seed,  
For stranger service gave thee guerdon stranger ;  
If this indeed be guerdon, this indeed  
Her mercy, this thy meed—  
That thou, being more than all we born, being higher  
Than all heads crowned of him that only gives  
The light whereby man lives,  
The bay that bids man moved of God's desire  
Lay hand on lute or lyre,  
Set lip to trumpet or deflowered green reed—  
If this were given thee for a grace indeed,  
That thou, being first of all these, thou alone  
Shouldst have the grace to die not, but to live  
And lose nor change one pulse of song, one tone  
Of all that were thy lady's and thine own,  
Thy lady's whom thou criedst on to forgive,



Thou, priest and sacrifice on the altar-stone  
Where none may worship not of all that live,  
Love's priestess, errant on dark ways diverse ;  
If this were grace indeed for Love to give,  
If this indeed were blessing and no curse.

Love's priestess, mad with pain and joy of song,  
Song's priestess, mad with joy and pain of love,  
Name above all names that are lights above,  
We have loved, praised, pitied, crowned and done thee  
wrong,

O thou past praise and pity ; thou the sole  
Utterly deathless, perfect only and whole  
Immortal, body and soul.  
For over all whom time hath overpast  
The shadow of sleep inexorable is cast,  
The implacable sweet shadow of perfect sleep

That gives not back what life gives death to keep ;  
Yea, all that lived and loved and sang and sinned  
Are all borne down death's cold sweet soundless wind  
That blows all night and knows not whom its breath,  
Darkling, may touch to death :  
But one that wind hath touched and changed not,—one  
Whose body and soul are parcel of the sun ;  
One that earth's fire could burn not, nor the sea  
Quench; nor might human doom take hold on thee;  
All praise, all pity, all dreams have done thee wrong,  
All love, with eyes love-blinded from above ;  
Song's priestess, mad with joy and pain of love,  
Love's priestess, mad with pain and joy of song.  
  
Hast thou none other answer then for me  
Than the air may have of thee,  
Or the earth's warm woodlands girdling with green girth

Thy secret sleepless burning life on earth,  
Or even the sea that once, being woman crowned  
And girt with fire and glory of anguish round,  
Thou wert so fain to seek to, fain to crave  
If she would hear thee and save  
And give thee comfort of thy great green grave?  
Because I have known thee always who thou art,  
Thou knowest, have known thee to thy heart's own heart,  
Nor ever have given light ear to storied song  
That did thy sweet name sweet unwitting wrong,  
Nor ever have called thee nor would call for shame,  
Thou knowest, but inly by thine only name,  
Sappho—because I have known thee and loved, hast  
    thou  
None other answer now?  
As brother and sister were we, child and bird,  
Since thy first Lesbian word

Flamed on me, and I knew not whence I knew  
This was the song that struck my whole soul through,  
Pierced my keen spirit of sense with edge more keen,  
Even when I knew not,—even ere sooth was seen,—  
When thou wast but the tawny sweet winged thing  
Whose cry was but of spring.

And yet even so thine ear should hear me—yea,  
Hear me this nightfall by this northland bay,  
Even for their sake whose loud good word I had,  
Singing of thee in the all-beloved clime  
Once, where the windy wine of spring makes mad  
Our sisters of Majano, who kept time  
Clear to my choral rhyme.  
Yet was the song acclaimed of these aloud  
Whose praise had made mute humbleness misproud,  
The song with answering song applauded thus,

But of that Daulian dream of Itylus.  
So but for love's love haply was it—nay,  
How else ?—that even their song took my song's part,  
For love of love and sweetness of sweet heart,  
Or god-given glorious madness of mid May  
And heat of heart and hunger and thirst to sing,  
Full of the new wine of the wind of spring.

Or if this were not, and it be not sin  
To hold myself in spirit of thy sweet kin,  
In heart and spirit of song ;  
If this my great love do thy grace no wrong,  
Thy grace that gave me grace to dwell therein ;  
If thy gods thus be my gods, and their will  
Made my song part of thy song—even such part  
As man's hath of God's heart—  
And my life like as thy life to fulfil ;

What have our gods then given us? Ah, to thee,  
Sister, much more, much happier than to me,  
Much happier things they have given, and more of grace  
Than falls to man's light race ;  
For lighter are we, all our love and pain  
Lighter than thine, who knowest of time or place  
Thus much, that place nor time  
Can heal or hurt or lull or change again  
The singing soul that makes his soul sublime  
Who hears the far fall of its fire-fledged rhyme  
Fill darkness as with bright and burning rain  
Till all the live gloom inly glows, and light  
Seems with the sound to cleave the core of night.

The singing soul that moves thee, and that moved  
When thou wast woman, and their songs divine  
Who mixed for Grecian mouths heaven's lyric wine

Fell dumb, fell down reproved  
Before one sovereign Lesbian song of thine.  
That soul, though love and life had fain held fast,  
Wind-winged with fiery music, rose and past  
Through the indrawn hollow of earth and heaven and  
hell,

As through some strait sea-shell  
The wide sea's immemorial song,—the sea  
That sings and breathes in strange men's ears of thee  
How in her barren bride-bed, void and vast,  
Even thy soul sang itself to sleep at last.

To sleep? Ah, then, what song is this, that here  
Makes all the night one ear,  
One ear fulfilled and mad with music, one  
Heart kindling as the heart of heaven, to hear  
A song more fiery than the awakening sun

Sings, when his song sets fire  
To the air and clouds that build the dead night's pyre ?  
*O thou of divers-coloured mind, O thou*  
*Deathless, God's daughter subtle-souled*—lo, now,  
Now too the song above all songs, in flight  
Higher than the day-star's height,  
And sweet as sound the moving wings of night !  
*Thou of the divers-coloured seat*—behold,  
Her very song of old !—  
*O deathless, O God's daughter subtle-souled !*  
That same cry through this boskage overhead  
Rings round reiterated,  
Palpitates as the last palpitated,  
The last that panted through her lips and died  
Not down this grey north sea's half sapped cliff-side  
That crumbles toward the coastline, year by year  
More near the sands and near ;



The last loud lyric fiery cry she cried,  
Heard once on heights Leucadian,—heard not here.

Not here ; for this that fires our northland night,  
This is the song that made  
Love fearful, even the heart of love afraid,  
With the great anguish of its great delight.  
No swan-song, no far-fluttering half-drawn breath,  
No word that love of love's sweet nature saith,  
No dirge that lulls the narrowing lids of death,  
No healing hymn of peace-prevented strife,—  
This is her song of life.

*I loved thee*,—hark, one tenderer note than all—  
*At this, of old time, once*—one low long fall,  
Sighing—one long low lovely loveless call,  
Dying—one pause in song so flamelike fast—

*At this, long since in old time overpast—*

One soft first pause and last.

One,—then the old rage of rapture's fieriest rain

Storms all the music-maddened night again.

*Child of God, close craftswoman, I beseech thee,*

*Bid not ache nor agony break nor master,*

*Lady, my spirit—*

O thou her mistress, might her cry not reach thee ?

Our Lady of all men's loves, could Love go past her,

Pass, and not hear it ?

She hears not as she heard not ; hears not me,

O treble-natured mystery,—how should she

Hear, or give ear ?—who heard and heard not thee ;


Heard, and went past, and heard not ; but all time

Hears all that all the ravin of his years

Hath cast not wholly out of all men's ears  
And dulled to death with deep dense funeral chime  
Of their reiterate rhyme.

And now of all songs uttering all her praise,  
All hers who had thy praise and did thee wrong,  
Abides one song yet of her lyric days,  
Thine only, this thy song.

O soul triune, woman and god and bird,  
Man, man at least has heard.  
All ages call thee conqueror, and thy cry  
The mightiest as the least beneath the sky  
Whose heart was ever set to song, or stirred  
With wind of mounting music blown more high  
Than wildest wing may fly,  
Hath heard or hears,—even Æschylus as I.  
But when thy name was woman, and thy word



Human,—then haply, surely then meseems  
This thy bird's note was heard on earth of none,  
Of none save only in dreams.  
In all the world then surely was but one  
Song ; as in heaven at highest one sceptred sun  
Regent, on earth here surely without fail  
One only, one imperious nightingale.  
Dumb was the field, the woodland mute, the lawn  
Silent ; the hill was tongueless as the vale  
Even when the last fair waif of cloud that felt  
Its heart beneath the colouring moonrays melt,  
At high midnoon of midnight half withdrawn,  
Bared all the sudden deep divine moondawn.  
Then, unsaluted by her twin-born tune,  
That latter timeless morning of the moon  
Rose past its hour of moonrise ; clouds gave way  
To the old reconquering ray,

But no song answering made it more than day ;  
No cry of song by night  
Shot fire into the cloud-constraining light.  
One only, one Æolian island heard  
Thrill, but through no bird's throat,  
In one strange manlike maiden's godlike note,  
The song of all these as a single bird.  
Till the sea's portal was as funeral gate  
For that sole singer in all time's ageless date  
Singled and signed for so triumphal fate,  
All nightingales but one in all the world  
All her sweet life were silent ; only then,  
When her life's wing of womanhood was furled,  
Their cry, this cry of thine was heard again,  
As of me now, of any born of men.  
  
Through sleepless clear spring nights filled full of thee,

Rekindled here, thy ruling song has thrilled  
The deep dark air and subtle tender sea  
And breathless hearts with one bright sound fulfilled.  
Or at midnoon to me  
Swimming, and birds about my happier head  
Skimming, one smooth soft way by water and air,  
To these my bright born brethren and to me  
Hath not the clear wind borne or seemed to bear  
A song wherein all earth and heaven and sea  
Were molten in one music made of thee  
To enforce us, O our sister of the shore,  
Look once in heart back landward and adore ?  
For songless were we sea-mews, yet had we  
More joy than all things joyful of thee—more,  
Haply, than all things happiest ; nay, save thee,  
In thy strong rapture of imperious joy  
Too high for heart of sea-borne bird or boy,

What living things were happiest if not we ?  
But knowing not love nor change nor wrath nor wrong,  
No more we knew of song.

Song, and the secrets of it, and their might,  
What blessings curse it and what curses bless,  
I know them since my spirit had first in sight,  
Clear as thy song's words or the live sun's light,  
The small dark body's Lesbian loveliness  
That held the fire eternal ; eye and ear  
Were as a god's to see, a god's to hear,  
Through all his hours of daily and nightly chime,  
The sundering of the two-edged spear of time :  
The spear that pierces even the sevenfold shields  
Of mightiest Memory, mother of all songs made,  
And wastes all songs as roseleaves kissed and frayed  
As here the harvest of the foam-flowered fields ;

But thine the spear may waste not that he wields  
Since first the God whose soul is man's live breath,  
The sun whose face hath our sun's face for shade,  
Put all the light of life and love and death  
Too strong for life, but not for love too strong,  
Where pain makes peace with pleasure in thy song,  
And in thine heart, where love and song make strife,  
Fire everlasting of eternal life.



# THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE



*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.*

SEA, and bright wind, and heaven of ardent air,  
More dear than all things earth-born ; O to me  
Mother more dear than love's own longing, sea,  
More than love's eyes are, fair,  
Be with my spirit of song as wings to bear,  
As fire to feel and breathe and brighten ; be  
A spirit of sense more deep of deity,  
A light of love, if love may be, more strong  
In me than very song.  
For song I have loved with second love, but thee,

68      *THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.*

Thee first, thee, mother ; ere my songs had breath,  
That love of loves, whose bondage makes man  
free,

Was in me strong as death.

And seeing no slave may love thee, no, not  
one

That loves not freedom more,

And more for thy sake loves her, and for hers

Thee ; or that hates not, on whate'er thy shore

Or what thy wave soever, all things done

Of man beneath the sun

In his despite and thine, to cross and curse

Your light and song that as with lamp and verse

Guide safe the strength of our sphered universe,

Thy breath it was, thou knowest, and none but  
thine,

That taught me love of one thing more divine.

*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.* 69

Ah, yet my youth was old, *str. 1.*  
Its first years dead and cold  
As last year's autumn's gold,  
And all my spirit of singing sick and sad and sere,  
Or ever I might behold  
The fairest of thy fold  
Engirt, enringed, enrolled,  
In all thy flower-sweet flock of islands dear and near.

Yet in my heart I deemed *str. 2.*  
The fairest things, meseemed,  
Truth, dreaming, ever dreamed,  
Had made mine eyes already like a god's to see :  
Of all sea-things that were  
Clothed on with water and air,  
That none could live more fair  
Than thy sweet love long since had shown for love to me

I knew not, mother of mine, *ant. 1.*

That one birth more divine

Than all births else of thine

That hang like flowers or jewels on thy deep soft breast

Was left for me to shine

Above thy girdling line

Of bright and breathing brine,

To take mine eyes with rapture and my sense with rest.

That this was left for me, *ant. 2.*

Mother, to have of thee,

To touch, to taste, to see,

To feel as fire fulfilling all my blood and breath,

As wine of living fire

Keen as the heart's desire

That makes the heart its pyre

And on its burning visions burns itself to death.

*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.* 71

For here of all thy waters, here of all  
Thy windy ways the wildest, and beset  
As some beleaguered city's war-breached wall  
With deaths enmeshed all round it in deep net,  
Thick sown with rocks deadlier than steel, and fierce  
With loud cross-counteracting currents, where the ship  
Flags, flickering like a wind-bewildered leaf,  
The densest weft of waves that prow may pierce  
Coils round the sharpest warp of shoals that dip  
Suddenly, scarce well under for one brief  
Keen breathing-space between the streams adverse,  
Scarce showing the fanged edge of one hungering lip  
Or one tooth lipless of the ravening reef ;  
And midmost of the murderous water's web  
All round it stretched and spun,  
Laughs, reckless of rough tide and raging ebb,  
The loveliest thing that shines against the sun.

72      *THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.*

O flower of all wind-flowers and sea-flowers,    *str.* 3.

    Made lovelier by love of the sea

Than thy golden own field-flowers, or tree-flowers

    Like foam of the sea-facing tree !

No foot but the sea-mew's there settles

    On the spikes of thine anthers like horns,

With snow-coloured spray for thy petals,

    Black rocks for thy thorns.

Was it here, in the waste of his waters,      *ant.* 3.

    That the lordly north wind, when his love

On the fairest of many king's daughters

    Bore down for a spoil from above,

Chose forth of all farthest far islands,

    As a haven to harbour her head,

Of all lowlands on earth and all highlands,

    His bride-worthy bed ?



*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.* 73

Or haply, my sea-flower, he found thee *str. 4.*

Made fast as with anchors to land,  
And broke, that his waves might be round thee,  
Thy fetters like rivets of sand ?  
And afar by the blast of him drifted  
Thy blossom of beauty was borne,  
As a lark by the heart in her lifted  
To mix with the morn ?

By what rapture of rage, by what vision *ant. 4.*

Of a heavenlier heaven than above,  
Was he moved to devise thy division  
From the land as a rest for his love ?  
As a nest when his wings would remeasure  
The ways where of old they would be,  
As a bride-bed upbuilt for his pleasure  
By sea-rock and sea ?

74      *THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.*

For in no deeps of midmost inland May  
More flower-bright flowers the hawthorn, or more sweet  
Swells the wild gold of the earth for wandering feet ;  
For on no northland way  
Crowds the close whin-bloom closer, set like thee  
With thorns about for fangs of sea-rock shown  
Through blithe lips of the bitter brine to lee ;  
Nor blithelier landward comes the sea-wind blown,  
Nor blithelier leaps the land-wind back to sea :  
Nor louder springs the living song of birds  
To shame our sweetest words.  
And in the narrowest of thine hollowest hold  
For joy thine aspens quiver as though for cold,  
And many a self-lit flower-illuminated tree  
Outlaughs with snow-bright or with rose-bright glee  
The laughter of the fields whose laugh is gold.  
Yea, even from depth to height,

Even thine own beauty with its own delight  
Fulfills thine heart in thee an hundredfold  
Beyond the larger hearts of islands bright  
With less intense contraction of desire  
Self-satiate, centred in its own deep fire ;  
Of shores not self-enchanted and entranced  
By heavenly severance from all shadow of mirth  
Or mourning upon earth :  
As thou, by no similitude enhanced,  
By no fair foil made fairer, but alone  
Fair as could be no beauty save thine own,  
And wondrous as no world-beholden wonder :  
Throned, with the world's most perilous sea for throne,  
And praised from all its choral throats of thunder.

Yet one praise hast thou, holier *str.* 5.

Than praise of theirs may be,

To exalt thee, wert thou lowlier

Than all that take the sea

With shores whence waves ebb slower

Than these fall off from thee :

That One, whose name gives glory, *ant. 5.*

One man whose life makes light,

One crowned and throned in story

Above all empire's height,

Came, where thy straits run hoary,

To hold thee fast in sight ;

With hallowing eyes to hold thee, *str. 6.*

With rapturous heart to read,

To encompass and enfold thee

With love whence all men feed,

To brighten and behold thee,

Who is mightiest of man's seed :

*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.* 77

More strong than strong disaster, *ant. 6.*

For fate and fear too strong ;

Earth's friend, whose eyes look past her,

Whose hands would purge of wrong ;

Our lord, our light, our master,

Whose word sums up all song.

Be it April or September *str. 7.*

That plays his perfect part,

Burn June or blow December,

Thou canst not in thine heart

But rapturously remember,

All heavenlike as thou art,

Whose footfall made thee fairer, *ant. 7.*

Whose passage more divine,

Whose hand, our thunder-bearer,

Held fire that bade thee shine

With subtler glory and rarer  
Than thrills the sun's own shrine.

Who knows how then his godlike banished gaze  
Turned haply from its goal of natural days  
And homeward hunger for the clear French clime,  
Toward English earth, whereunder now the Accursed  
Rots, in the hate of all men's hearts inhearsed,  
A carrion ranker to the sense of time  
For that sepulchral gift of stone and lime  
By royal grace laid on it, less of weight  
Than the load laid by fate,  
Fate, misbegotten child of his own crime,  
Son of as foul a bastard-bearing birth  
As even his own on earth ;  
Less heavy than the load of cursing piled  
By loyal grace of all souls undefiled

On one man's head, whose reeking soul made rotten  
The loathed live corpse on earth once misbegotten ?  
But when our Master's homeless feet were here,  
France yet was foul with joy more foul than fear,  
And slavery chosen, more vile by choice of chance  
Than dull damnation of inheritance  
From Russian year to year.  
Alas fair mother of men, alas my France,  
What ailed thee so to fall, that wert so dear  
For all men's sake to all men, in such trance,  
Plague-stricken ? Had the very Gods, that saw  
Thy glory lighten on us for a law,  
Thy gospel go before us for a guide,  
Had these waxed envious of our love and awe  
Or was it less their envy than thy pride  
That bared thy breast for the obscene vulture-claw,  
High priestess, by whose mouth Love prophesied

80      *THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.*

That fate should yet mean freedom ?    Howsoever,  
That hour, the helper of men's hearts, we praise,  
Which blots out of man's book of after days  
The name above all names abhorred for ever.  
And His name shall we praise not, whom these  
          flowers,  
These rocks and ravening waters bound for girth  
Round this wild starry spanlong plot of earth,  
Beheld, the mightier for those heavier hours  
That bowed his heart not down  
Nor marred one crowning blossom of his crown ?  
For surely, might we say,  
Even from the dark deep sea-gate that makes way  
Through channelled darkness for the darkling day  
Hardly to let men's faltering footfall win  
The sunless passage in,  
Where breaks a world aflower against the sun,



*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.* 81.

A small sweet world of wave-encompassed wonder,  
Kept from the wearier landward world asunder  
With violence of wild waters, and with thunder  
Of many winds as one,  
To where the keen sea-current grinds and frets  
The black bright sheer twin flameless Altarlets  
That lack no live blood-sacrifice they crave  
Of shipwreck and the shrine-subservient wave,  
Having for priest the storm-wind, and for choir  
Lightnings and clouds whose prayers and praise are fire,  
All the isle acclaimed him coming ; she, the least  
Of all things loveliest that the sea's love hides  
From strange men's insult, walled about with tides  
That bid strange guests back from her flower-strewn  
feast,  
Set all her fields aflower, her flowers aflame,  
To applaud him that he came.

82      *THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.*

Nor surely flashed not something of delight  
Through that steep strait of rock whose twin-cliffed  
    height  
Links crag with crag reiterate, land with land,  
By one sheer thread of narrowing precipice  
Bifront, that binds and sunders  
Abyss from hollower imminent abyss  
And wilder isle with island, blind for bliss  
Of sea that lightens and of wind that thunders ;  
Nor pealed not surely back from deep to steep  
Reverberate acclamation, steep to deep  
Inveterately reclaiming and replying  
Praise, and response applausive ; nor the sea,  
For all the sea-wind's crying,  
Knew not the song her sister, even as she  
Thundering, or like her confluent spring-tides brighten-  
    ing,

And like her darkness lightening ;  
The song that moved about him silent, now  
Both soundless wings refolded and refurled  
On that Promethean brow,  
Then quivering as for flight that wakes the world.

From the roots of the rocks underlying the gulfs that  
engird it around *str. 8.*  
Was the isle not enkindled with light of him landing,  
or thrilled not with sound ?  
Yea, surely the sea like a harper laid hand on the shore  
as a lyre,  
As the lyre in his own for a birthright of old that was  
given of his sire,  
And the hand of the child was put forth on the chords  
yet alive and aflame

84      *THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.*

From the hand of the God that had wrought it in heaven ;  
and the hand was the same.

And the tongue of the child spake, singing ; and never a  
note that he sang,

But the strings made answer unstricken, as though for  
the God they rang.

And the eyes of the child shone, lightening ; and touched  
as by life at his nod,

They shuddered with music, and quickened as though  
from the glance of the God.

So trembled the heart of the hills and the rocks to  
receive him, and yearned

With desirous delight of his presence and love that  
beholding him burned.

Yea, down through the mighty twin hollows where never  
the sunlight shall be,

Deep sunk under imminent earth, and subdued to the  
stress of the sea,

*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.* 85

That feel when the dim week changes by change of their ,  
tides in the dark,

As the wave sinks under within them, reluctant, removed  
from its mark,

Even there in the terror of twilight in bloom with its  
blossoms ablush,

Did a sense of him touch not the gleam of their flowers  
with a fierier flush ?

Though the sun they behold not for ever, yet knew they  
not over them One

Whose soul was the soul of the morning, whose song was  
the song of the sun ?

But the secrets inviolate of sunlight in hollows untrodden  
of day,

Shall he dream what are these who beholds not ? or he  
that hath seen, shall he say ?

For the path is for passage of sea-mews ; and he that  
hath glided and leapt

Over sea-grass and sea-rock, alighting as one from a  
citadel crept

That his foemen beleaguer, descending by darkness and  
stealth, at the last

Peers under, and all is as hollow to hellward, agape and  
aghast.

But afloat and afar in the darkness a tremulous colour  
subsides

*ant. 8.*

From the crimson high crest of the purple-peaked roof  
to the soft-coloured sides

That brighten as ever they widen till downward the level  
is won

Of the soundless and colourless water that knows not the  
sense of the sun :

From the crown of the culminant arch to the floor of the  
lakelet abloom,

*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.* 87

One infinite blossom of blossoms innumerable aflush  
through the gloom.

All under the deeps of the darkness are glimmering ; all  
over impends

An immeasurable infinite flower of the dark that dilates  
and descends,

That exults and expands in its breathless and blind  
efflorescence of heart

As it broadens and bows to the wave-ward, and breathes  
not, and hearkens apart.

As a beaker inverse at a feast on Olympus, exhausted of  
wine,

But inlaid as with rose from the lips of Dione that left it  
divine :

From the lips everliving of laughter and love everlasting,  
that leave

In the cleft of his heart who shall kiss them a snake to  
corrode it and cleave.

88      *THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.*

So glimmers the gloom into glory, the glory recoils into  
gloom,

That the eye of the sun could not kindle, the lip not of  
Love could relume.

So darkens reverted the cup that the kiss of her mouth  
set on fire :

So blackens a brand in his eyeshot as moulder awhile  
from the pyre.

For the beam from beneath and without it refrangent  
again from the wave

Strikes up through the portal a ghostly reverse on the  
dome of the cave,

On the depth of the dome ever darkling and dim to the  
crown of its arc :

That the sun-coloured tapestry, sunless for ever, may  
soften the dark.

---



But within through the side-seen archway aglimmer again  
from the right

Is the seal of the sea's tide set on the mouth of the  
mystery of night.

And the seal on the seventh day breaks but a little, that  
man may behold

What the sun hath not looked on, the stars of the night  
have not seen from of old.

Even like that hollow-bosomed rose, inverse

And infinite, the heaven of thy vast verse,

Our Master, over all our souls impends,

Imminent ; we, with heart-enkindled eyes

Upwondering, search the music-moulded skies

Sphere by sweet sphere, concordant as it blends

Light of bright sound, sound of clear light, in one,

As all the stars found utterance through the sun.

And all that heaven is like a rose in bloom,  
Flower-coloured, where its own sun's fires illumine  
As from one central and imperious heart  
The whole sky's every part :  
But lightening still and darkling downward, lo  
The light and darkness of it,  
The leaping of the lamping levin afar  
Between the full moon and the sunset star,  
The war-song of the sounding skies aglow,  
That have the herald thunder for their prophet :  
From north to south the lyric lights that leap,  
The tragic sundawns reddening east and west  
As with bright blood from one Promethean breast,  
The peace of noon that strikes the sea to sleep,  
The wail over the world of all that weep,  
The peace of night when death brings life on rest.

*THE GARDEN OF CYMODOCE.* 91

Goddess who gatherest all the herded waves  
Into thy great sweet pastureless green fold,  
Even for our love of old,  
I pray thee by thy power that slays and saves,  
Take thou my song of this thy flower to keep,  
Who hast my heart in hold ;  
And from thine high place of thy garden-steep,  
Where one sheer terrace oversees thy deep  
From the utmost rock-reared height  
Down even to thy dear depths of night and light,  
Take my song's salutation ; and on me  
Breathe back the benediction of thy sea.



*BETWEEN two seas the sea-bird's wing makes halt,  
Wind-weary; while with lifting head he waits  
For breath to reinspire him from the gates  
That open still toward sunrise on the vault  
High-domed of morning, and in flight's default  
With spreading sense of spirit anticipates  
What new sea now may lure beyond the straits  
His wings exulting that her winds exalt  
And fill them full as sails to seaward spread,  
Fulfilled with fair speed's promise. Pass, my song,  
Forth to the haven of thy desire and dread,  
The presence of our lord, long loved and long  
Far off above beholden, who to thee  
Was as light kindling all a windy sea.*



BIRTHDAY ODE

FOR THE ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL OF

VICTOR HUGO

FEBRUARY 26TH 1880





*BIRTHDAY ODE*

FOR THE ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL OF VICTOR HUGO,

FEBRUARY 20, 1880.

SPRING, born in heaven ere many a springtime  
                   flown, *strophe 1.*

Dead spring that sawest on earth

A babe of deathless birth,

A flower of rosier flowerage than thine own,

A glory of goodlier godhead ; even this day,

That floods the mist of February with May,

And strikes death dead with sunlight, and the breath

Whereby the deadly doers are done to death,

They that in day's despite  
Would crown the imperial night,  
And in deep hate of insubmissive spring  
Rethrone the royal winter for a king,  
This day that casts the days of darkness down  
Low as a broken crown,  
We call thee from the gulf of deeds and days,  
Deathless and dead, to hear us whom we praise.

A light of many lights about thine head,                    *antistrophe 1.*  
Lights manifold and one,  
Stars molten in a sun,  
A sun of divers beams incorporated,                    20  
Compact of confluent aureoles, each more fair  
Than man, save only at highest of man, may wear,  
So didst thou rise, when this our grey-grown age  
Had trod two paces of his pilgrimage,

*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

99

Two paces through the gloom  
From his fierce father's tomb,  
Led by cross lights of lightnings, and the flame  
That burned in darkness round one darkling name ;  
So didst thou rise, nor knewest thy glory, O thou  
Re-risen upon us now, 30  
The glory given thee for a grace to give,  
And take the praise of all men's hearts that live.

First in the dewy ray *epode 1.*

Ere dawn be slain of day

The fresh crowned lilies of discrowned kings' prime

Sprang splendid as of old

With moonlight-coloured gold

And rays refract from the oldworld heaven of time ;

Pale with proud light of stars decreased

In westward wane reluctant from the conquering east. 40

But even between their golden olden bloom *str. 2.*

Strange flowers of wildwood glory,

With frost and moonshine hoary,

Thrust up the new growths of their green-leaved  
gloom,

Red buds of ballad blossom, where the dew

Blushed as with bloodlike passion, and its hue

Was as the life and love of hearts on flame,

And fire from forth of each live chalice came :

Young sprays of elder song,

Stem straight and petal strong, 50

Bright foliage with dark frondage overlaid,

And light the lovelier for its lordlier shade ;

And morn and even made loud in woodland lone

With cheer of clarions blown,

And through the tourney's clash and clarion's cheer

Laugh to laugh echoing, tear washed off by tear.

*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

101

Then eastward far past northland lea and lawn *ant.* 2.

Beneath a heavier light

Of stormier day and night

Began the music of the heaven of dawn ; 60

Bright sound of battle along the Grecian waves,

Loud light of thunder above the Median graves,

New strife, new song on Æschylean seas,

Canaris risen above Themistocles ;

Old glory of warrior ghosts

Shed fresh on filial hosts,

With dewfall redder than the dews of day,

And earth-born lightnings out of bloodbright spray ;

Then through the flushed grey gloom on shadowy  
sheaves

Low flights of falling leaves ; 70

And choirs of birds transfiguring as they throng

All the world's twilight and the soul's to song.

Voices more firmly deep

str. 2

Than the inmost heart of sleep.

And tenderer than the rose-mountain morning's lips ;

And midmost of them heard

The viewless water's word.

The sea's breath in the wind's wing and the ship's,

That bids one swell and sound and smite

And rend that other in sunder as with fangs by night. So

But ah ! the glory of shadow and mingling ray, str. 3.

The story of morn and even

Whose tale was writ in heaven

And had for scroll the night, for scribe the day !

For scribe the prophet of the morning, far

Exalted over twilight and her star ;

For scroll beneath his Apollonian hand

The dim twin wastes of sea and glimmering land.

*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

103

Hark, on the hill-wind, clear

For all men's hearts to hear

90

Sound like a stream at nightfall from the steep

That all time's depths might answer, deep to deep,

With trumpet-measures of triumphal wail

From windy vale to vale,

The crying of one for love that strayed and sinned

Whose brain took madness of the mountain wind.

Between the birds of brighter and duskier wing, *ant.* 3.

What mightier-moulded forms

Girt with red clouds and storms

Mix their strong hearts with theirs that soar and

sing?

100

Before the storm-blast blown of death's dark horn

The marriage moonlight withers, that the morn

For two made one may find three made by death  
One ruin at the blasting of its breath :  
Clothed with heart's flame renewed  
And strange new maidenhood,  
Faith lightens on the lips that bloomed for hire  
Pure as the lightning of love's first-born fire :  
Wide-eyed and patient ever, till the curse  
Find where to fall and pierce,  
Keen expiation whets with edge more dread  
A father's wrong to smite a father's head.

110

Borgia, supreme from birth  
As loveliest born on earth  
Since earth bore ever women that were fair ;  
Scarce known of her own house  
If daughter or sister or spouse ;  
Who holds men's hearts yet helpless with her hair ;

*cp.* 3.



*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

105

The direst of divine things made,  
Bows down her amorous aureole half suffused with  
shade.

120

As red the fire-scathed royal northland bloom, *str. 4.*

That left our story a name

Dyed through with blood and flame

Ere her life shrivelled from a fierier doom

Than theirs her priests bade pass from earth in fire

To slake the thirst of God their Lord's desire :

As keen the blast of love-enkindled fate

That burst the Paduan tyrant's guarded gate :

As sad the softer moan

Made one with music's own

130

For one whose feet made music as they fell

On ways by loveless love made hot from hell :

But higher than these and all the song thereof

The perfect heart of love,  
The heart by fraud and hate once crucified,  
That, dying, gave thanks, and in thanksgiving died.

Above the windy walls that rule the Rhine *ant. 4.*

A noise of eagles' wings

And wintry war-time rings,

With roar of ravage trampling corn and vine *140*

And storm of wrathful wassail dashed with song ;

And under these the watch of wreakless wrong,

With fire of eyes anhungered ; and above

These, the light of the stricken eyes of love,

The faint sweet eyes that follow

The wind-outwinging swallow,

And face athirst with young wan yearning mouth

Turned after toward the unseen all-golden south,

Hopeless to see the birds back ere life wane,

*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

107

Or the leaves born again ;

150

And still the might and music mastering fate

Of life more strong than death and love than hate.

In spectral strength biform

*cp.* 4.

Stand the twin sons of storm

Transfigured by transmission of one hand

That gives the new-born time

Their semblance more sublime

Than once it lightened over each man's land ;

There Freedom's winged and wide-mouthed hound,

And here our high Dictator, in his son discrowned. 160

What strong-limbed shapes of kindred throng round

these

*str.* 5.

Before, between, behind,

Sons born of one man's mind,

Fed at his hands and fostered round his knees ?

Fear takes the spirit in thralldom at his nod,

And pity makes it as the spirit of God,

As his own soul that from her throne above

Sheds on all souls of men her showers of love,

On all earth's evil and pain

Pours mercy forth as rain

170

And comfort as the dewfall on dry land ;

And feeds with pity from a faultless hand

All by their own fault stricken, all cast out

By all men's scorn or doubt,

Or with their own hands wounded, or by fate

Brought into bondage of men's fear or hate,

In violence of strange visions north and south

t. 5.

Confronted, east and west,

With frozen or fiery breast,

*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

109

Eyes fixed or fevered, pale or bloodred mouth, 180  
Kept watch about his dawn-enkindled dreams ;  
But ere high noon a light of nearer beams  
Made his young heaven of manhood more benign,  
And love made soft his lips with spiritual wine,  
And left them fired, and fed  
With sacramental bread,  
And swéet with honey of tenderer words than tears  
To feed men's hopes and fortify men's fears,  
And strong to silence with benignant breath  
The lips that doom to death, 190  
And swift with speech like fire in fiery lands  
To melt the steel's edge in the headsman's hands.

Higher than they rose of old, ep. 5.

New builded now, behold,

The live great likeness of Our Lady's towers ;

And round them like a dove  
Wounded, and sick with love,  
One fair ghost moving, crowned with fateful flowers,  
Watched yet with eyes of bloodred lust  
And eyes of love's heart broken and unbroken trust. 200

But sadder always under shadowier skies, *str. 6.*  
More pale and sad and clear  
Waxed always, drawn more near,  
The face of Duty lit with Love's own eyes ;  
Till the awful hands that culled in rosier hours  
From fairy-footed fields of wild old flowers  
And sorcerous woods of Rhineland, green and hoary,  
Young children's chaplets of enchanted story,  
The great kind hands that showed  
Exile its homeward road, 210  
And, as man's helper made his foeman God,

*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

III

Of pity and mercy wrought themselves a rod,  
And opened for Napoleon's wandering kin  
France, and bade enter in,  
And threw for all the doors of refuge wide,  
Took to them lightning in the thunder-tide.

For storm on earth above had risen from under, *ant.* 6.  
Out of the hollow of hell,  
Such storm as never fell  
From darkest deeps of heaven distract with thunder ;  
A cloud of cursing, past all shape of thought, 221  
More foul than foulest dreams, and overfraught  
With all obscene things and obscure of birth  
That ever made infection of man's earth ;  
Having all hell for cloak  
Wrapped round it as a smoke  
And in its womb such offspring so defiled

As earth bare never for her loathliest child,  
 Rose, brooded, reddened, broke, and with its breath  
 Put France to poisonous death ; 230  
 Yea, far as heaven's red labouring eye could glance,  
 France was not, save in men cast forth of France.

Then,—while the plague-sore grew ep. 6.  
 Two darkling decades through,  
 And rankled in the festering flesh of time,—  
 Where darkness binds and frees  
 The wildest of wild seas  
 In fierce mutations of the unslumbering clime,  
 There, sleepless too, o'er shuddering wrong  
 One hand appointed shook the reddening scourge of  
 song. 240

And through the lightnings of the apparent word str. 7.  
 Dividing shame's dense night



Sounds lovelier than the light

And light more sweet than song from night's own  
bird

Mixed each their hearts with other, till the gloom

Was glorious as with all the stars in bloom,

Sonorous as with all the spheres in chime

Heard far through flowering heaven : the sea,  
sublime

Once only with its own

Old winds' and waters' tone, 250

Sad only or glad with its own glory, and crowned

With its own light, and thrilled with its own sound,

Learnt now their song, more sweet than heaven's  
may be,

Who pass away by sea ;

The song that takes of old love's land farewell,

With pulse of plangent water like a knel

And louder ever and louder and yet more loud *ant. 7.*

Till night be shamed of morn

Rings the Black Huntsman's horn

Through darkening deeps beneath the covering  
cloud, 260

Till all the wild beasts of the darkness hear ;

Till the Czar quake, till Austria cower for fear,

Till the king breathe not, till the priest wax pale,

Till spies and slayers on seats of judgment quail,

Till mitre and cowl bow down

And crumble as a crown,

Till Cæsar driven to lair and hounded Pope

Reel breathless and drop heartless out of hope,

And one the uncleanest kinless beast of all

Lower than his fortune fall ; 270

The wolfish waif of casual empire, born

To turn all hate and horror cold with scorn.

*BIRTHDAY ODE:*

115

Yea, even at night's full noon *ep.* 7.

Light's birth-song brake in tune,

Spake, witnessing that with us one must be,

God ; naming so by name *t*

That priests have brought to shame

The strength whose scourge sounds on the smitten

sea ;

The mystery manifold of might

Which bids the wind give back to night the things of  
night. *280*

Even God, the unknown of all time ; force or  
thought, *str.* 8.

Nature or fate or will,

Clothed round with good and ill,

Veiled and revealed of all things and of nought,

Hooded and helmed with mystery, girt and shod

With light and darkness, unapparent God.

Him the high prophet o'er his wild work bent

Found indivisible ever and immanent

At hidden heart of truth,

In forms of age and youth 290

Transformed and transient ever ; masked and crowned,

From all bonds loosened and with all bonds bound,

Diverse and one with all things ; love and hate,

Earth, and the starry state

Of heaven immeasurable, and years that flee

As clouds and winds and rays across the sea.

But higher than stars and deeper than the waves *ant.* 8.

Of day and night and morrow

That roll for all time, sorrow

Keeps ageless watch over perpetual graves. 300



And Darkness in God's sight  
Grows as his brother Light,  
And heaven and hell one heart whence all the abyss  
Throbs with love's music ; from his trance  
Love waking leads it home to her who stayed in  
France.

320

But now from all the world-old winds of the air *str.* 9.  
One blast of record rings  
As from time's hidden springs  
With roar of rushing wings and fires that bear  
Toward north and south sonorous, east and west,  
Forth of the dark wherein its records rest,  
The story told of the ages, writ nor sung  
By man's hand ever nor by mortal tongue  
Till, godlike with desire,  
One tongue of man took fire,

330

One hand laid hold upon the lightning, one  
Rose up to bear time witness what the sun  
Had seen, and what the moon and stars of night  
Beholding lost not light :  
From dawn to dusk what ways man wandering trod  
Even through the twilight of the gods to God.

From dawn of man and woman twain and one, *ant.* 9.  
When the earliest dews impearled  
The front of all the world  
Ringed with aurean aureole of the sun, 340  
To days that saw Christ's tears and hallowing breath  
Put life for love's sake in the lips of death,  
And years as waves whose brine was fire, whose foam  
Blood, and the ravage of Neronian Rome ;  
And the eastern crescent's horn  
Mightier awhile than morn ;

And knights whose lives were flights of eagles' wings,

And lives like snakes' lives of engendering kings ;

And all the ravin of all the swords that reap

Lives cast as sheaves on heap 350

From all the billowing harvest-fields of fight ;

And sounds of love-songs lovelier than the light.

The grim dim thrones of the east *cp. 9.*

Set for death's riotous feast

Round the bright board where darkling centuries wait,

And servile slaughter, mute,

Feeds power with fresh red fruit,

Glitter and groan with mortal food of fate ;

And throne and cup and lamp's bright breath

Bear witness to their lord of only night and death. 360

Dead freedom by live empire lies defiled, *str. 10.*

And murder at his feet



*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

121

Plies lust with wine and meat,  
With offering of an old man and a child,  
With holy body and blood, inexpiable  
Communion in the sacrament of hell,  
Till, reeking from their monstrous eucharist,  
The lips wax cold that murdered where they kissed,  
And empire in mid feast

Fall as a slaughtered beast 370  
Headless, and ease men's hungering hearts of fear  
Lest God were none in heaven, to see nor hear,  
And purge his own pollution with the flood  
Poured of his black base blood  
So first found healing, poisonous as it poured ;  
And on the clouds the archangel cleanse his sword

As at the word unutterable that made *ant.* 1 .  
Of day and night division,  
From vision on to vision,

From dream to dream, from darkness into shade, 380

From sunshine into sunlight, moves and lives

The steersman's eye, the helming hand that gives

Life to the wheels and wings that whirl along

The immeasurable impulse of the sphere of song

Through all the eternal years,

Beyond all stars and spheres,

Beyond the washing of the waves of time,

Beyond all heights where no thought else may climb,

Beyond the darkling dust of suns that were,

Past height and depth of air ; 390

And in the abyss whence all things move that are

Finds only living Love, the sovereign star.

Nor less the weight and worth *ep.* 10.

Found even of love on earth'

To wash all stain of tears and sins away,

On dying lips alit  
That living knew not it,  
In the winged shape of song with death to play :  
To warm young children with its wings,  
And try with fire the heart elect for godlike things. 400

For all worst wants of all most miserable *str.* 11.

With divine hands to deal  
All balms and herbs that heal,  
Among all woes whereunder poor men dwell  
Our Master sent his servant Love, to be  
On earth his witness ; but the strange deep sea,  
Mother of life and death inextricate,  
What work should Love do there, to war with fate ?  
Yet there must Love too keep  
At heart of the eyeless deep 410  
Watch, and wage war wide-eyed with all its wonders,

Lower than the lightnings of its waves, and thunders  
Of seas less monstrous than the births they bred ;  
Keep high there heart and head,  
And conquer : then for prize of all toils past  
Feel the sea close them in again at last.

A day of direr doom arisen thereafter *ant* 11.

With cloud and fire in strife

Lightens and darkens life

Round one by man's hand masked with living  
laughter, 420

A man by men bemonstered, but by love


Watched with blind eyes as of a wakeful dove

And wooed by lust, that in her rosy den

As fire on flesh feeds on the souls of men,

To take the intense impure

Burnt-offering of her lure,



Divine and dark and bright and naked, strange  
With ravenous thirst of life reversed and change,  
As though the very heaven should shrivel and swell  
With hunger after hell, 430  
Run mad for dear damnation, and desire  
To feel its light thrilled through with stings of fire.

Above a windier sea, ep. 11.  
The glory of Ninety-three  
Fills heaven with blood-red and with rose-red beams  
That earth beholding grows  
Herself one burning rose  
Flagrant and fragrant with strange deeds and  
dreams,  
Dreams dyed as love's own flower, and deeds  
Stained as with love's own life-blood, that for love's sake  
bleeds. 440

And deeper than all deeps of seas and skies *str. 12.*

Wherein the shadows are

Called sun and moon and star

That rapt conjecture metes with mounting eyes,

Loud with strange waves and lustrous with new  
spheres,

Shines, masked at once and manifest of years,

Shakespeare, a heaven of heavenly eyes beholden ;

And forward years as backward years grow golden

With light of deeds and words

And flight of God's fleet birds, 450

Angels of wrath and love and truth and pity ;

And higher on exiled eyes their natural city

Dawns down the depths of vision, more sublime

Than all truths born of time ;

And eyes that wept above two dear sons dead

Grow saving stars to guard one hopeless head.

*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

127

Bright round the brows of banished age had  
shone *ant. 12.*

In vision flushed with truth

The rosy glory of youth

On streets and woodlands where in days long  
gone 460

Sweet love sang light and loud and deep and dear :

And far the trumpets of the dreadful year

Had pealed and wailed in darkness : last arose

The song of children, kindling as a rose

At breath of sunrise, born

Of the red flower of morn

Whose face perfumes deep heaven with odorous  
light

And thrills all through the wings of souls in flight

Close as the press of children at His knee

Whom if the high priest see, 470

Dreaming, as homeless on dark earth he trod,  
The lips that praise him shall not know for God.

O sovereign spirit, above *cp. 12.*  
All offering but man's love,  
All praise and prayer and incense undefiled !  
The one thing stronger found  
Than towers with iron bound ;  
The one thing lovelier than a little child,  
And deeper than the seas are deep,  
And tenderer than such tears of love as angels  
weep. 480

Dante, the seer of all things evil and good, *str. 13*  
Beheld two ladies, Beauty  
And high life-hallowing Duty,  
That strove for sway upon his mind and mood

---



And held him in alternating accord  
Fast bound at feet of either : but our lord,  
The seer and singer of righteousness and wrong  
Who stands now master of all the keys of song,  
Sees both as dewdrops run  
Together in the sun, 490  
For him not twain but one thing twice divine ;  
Even as his speech and song are bread and wine  
For all souls hungering and all hearts athirst  
At best of days and worst,  
And both one sacrament of Love's great giving  
To feed the spirit and sense of all souls living.

The seventh day in the wind's month, ten years  
gone an. 13.

Since heaven-espousing earth  
Gave the Republic birth,

The mightiest soul put mortal raiment on 500  
That came forth singing ever in man's ears  
Of all souls with us, and through all these years  
Rings yet the lordliest, waxen yet more strong,  
That on our souls hath shed itself in song,  
Poured forth itself like rain  
On souls like springing grain  
That with its procreant beams and showers were fed  
For living wine and sacramental bread ;  
Given all itself as air gives life and light,  
Utterly, as of right ; 510  
The goodliest gift our age hath given, to be  
Ours, while the sun gives glory to the sea.

Our Father and Master and Lord, *cp. 13.*

Who hast thy song for sword,

For staff thy spirit, and our hearts for throne ;

*BIRTHDAY ODE.*

131

As in past years of wrong,

Take now my subject song,

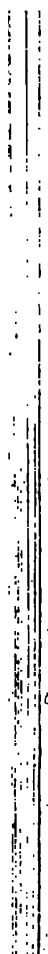
To no crowned head made humble but thine own :

That on thy day of worldly birth

Gives thanks for all thou hast given past thanks of all on

earth.

520



## NOTES.

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*On the proposed desecration of Westminster Abbey  
by the erection of a monument  
to the son of Napoleon III.*

‘ Let us go hence.’ From the inmost shrine of grace  
Where England holds the elect of all her dead  
There comes a word like one of old time said  
By gods of old cast out. Here is no place  
At once for these and one of poisonous race.  
Let each rise up from his dishallowed bed  
And pass forth silent. Each divine veiled head  
Shall speak in silence with averted face.  
‘ Scorn everlasting and eternal shame  
Eat out the rotting record of his name  
Who had the glory of all these graves in trust  
And turned it to a hissing. His offence  
Makes havoc of their desecrated dust  
Whose place is here no more. Let us go hence.’

Feb. 25, 1880.

- v. 297. *Les Contemplations*, 1856.  
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At the end of such a list, so incomparable as to seem incredible, of one great man's good works, we may be forgiven the alteration of a word even in a verse from Æschylus which we cannot choose but apply once more to this leader in the advance of men made perfect through doom of trial and long wayfaring, whose progress he furthers by example and stimulates by song :—

κύριός ἐστι θροεῖν ὄδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν  
 ἐκτελείων· ἔτι γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνέει  
 πειθῶ μολπῶν  
 ἀλκᾷ σύμφυτος αἰών. Æsch. *Agam.* 104-8.





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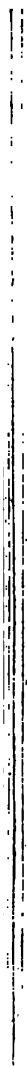
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